

FINAL PROJECT

Proposal, Annotated Bibliography, Research Paper (in 3 installments):

Peer Review for first installment: Wed, 2/13/08

Installment One: M, 2/18/08

Installment Two: W, 2/27/08

Installment Three: W, 3/12

Points will be deducted for Late Installments. Plan Ahead.

The first thing to do is craft a Project Proposal:

1. Identify the problem or question you will address. **Why is this particular issue problematic, or why does it raise questions?**
2. Once you have identified the problem, explain the characteristics of this problem. What is the “big” issue, and what are its constituents? What makes it an issue in the first place?
3. What are the contexts (smaller and larger) that make your study of this issue relevant? In other words, **who should care about this, and why?**
4. What evidence will you use to support your claim? What examples and lines of reasoning will allow you to “earn your conclusion”? In other words, what sources will you likely refer to? Where will you conduct your research?
5. What direction will your line of reasoning take? How will you take your discussion of this problem from point A to point Z? What will be discussed first; what factors caused other factors? **What is the logical progression of your line of reasoning?**
6. What key words and concepts are relevant to a discussion of your issue? You might think of key words that specialists and “non-specialists” might use when they talk about your field. For example, if you are conducting research on environmental concerns, “green,” eco-friendly,” “greenhouse gases,” and so on, might be “key words” in your project. Do they need to be explained? How might these words or phrases function in a rhetorical way: what kinds of readers/listeners will be reached based on one's use of a particular vocabulary?

Remember, this proposal will help you to think through a project that should be focused on ONE issue. While you are presenting an argument or analyzing an issue, your overall focus is rhetorical: who is the speaker/writer/theorist? What has this person or group done to establish credibility or lose it? Who will be most affected by the language (discourse)--who will act on it? Who will the discourse alienate? Remember, language has the power to move people to act in concrete ways -- it changes how we think about our lives, it changes (or can change) how we choose to treat others.

What is an annotated bibliography?

A bibliography is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) one uses for researching a topic. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the

author, title, publisher, etc.). An annotated bibliography includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources, in addition to the citation. Typically, you will summarize and assess a source and then **reflect on its value and usefulness to your research**.

Why do I need to bother with this? Writing an annotated bib will help you to:

- Learn about your topic: Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you're forced to read each source more carefully and evaluate it both for its authority and usefulness for your research. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information.
- Formulate a thesis: Every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis. So a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting, and current. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and responding to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and then be able to develop your own point of view.
- Contribute to others' research: Extensive and scholarly annotated bibliographies are sometimes published. They provide a comprehensive overview of everything that has been and is being said about that topic. You may not ever get your annotated bibliography published, but as a researcher, you might want to look for one that has been published about your topic.

Sample Annotations:

Zhou, Yongming. *Historicizing Online Politics : Telegraphy, the Internet, and Political Participation in China*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 2005.

The author examines the complex relationships connecting information technology and politics in modern China. The study consists of two parts: the first is a study of the impacts that telegraphy had on national politics in the last decades of the Qing dynasty, and the second focuses on the Internet and its impact on politics in China since the late 1990s.

This book is also valuable because the second part focuses the impact the Internet, as a form of new technology, has on the politics of China. It offers great evidence of how the authority's attitude regarding the new technology is. It can help me analyze the attitude of the government in each online protests mentioned in my paper and contrast them to show the change in the government's attitude.

Tai, Zixue. *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and Civil Society*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

In this book, the author, Zixue Tai, examines the cultural and political ramifications of the Internet on Chinese society. He analyses how individuals have responded with impassioned campaigns against official control of online information. The important question Tai asks is not whether the Internet will democratize China, but rather in what ways the Internet is democratizing communication in China.

This book is valuable for my research because it focuses on the impact the Internet makes on the democracy of China, which is my thesis, by providing examples and evidence. I will be able to compare these examples with more recent events related to online journalism.

The final paper is a natural outgrowth of your proposal and annotated bibliography. Once you have finalized your ideas and have completed your research, you will have nearly completed the paper! Remember that you must write a clear, compelling introduction that communicates your rhetorical purpose and your argument and that sets forth the basic structure of the paper.

You have already done the important work of evidence gathering, so I assume that the bulk of the paper, the support for the argument, will be the strongest part! We will conference together and then workshop the papers in class.

You will have ample class time to work on the final piece, the visual presentation, in class.